SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)

Purpose: With few exceptions, a true and valid Social Security Account Number is required for program eligibility. This category provides information and instructions for obtaining SSNs for the members of an assistance unit.

WAC 388-476-0005 Social Security Number requirements.

(1)   With certain exceptions, each person who applies for or receives cash, medical or food assistance benefits must provide to the department a Social Security Number (SSN), or numbers if more than one has been issued.

(2)   If the person is unable to provide the SSN, either because it is not known or has not been issued, the person must:

   (a)   Apply for the SSN;

   (b)   Provide proof that the SSN has been applied for; and

   (c)   Provide the SSN when it is received.

(3)   Assistance will not be delayed, denied or terminated pending the issuance of an SSN by the Social Security Administration. However, a person who does not comply with these requirements is not eligible for assistance.

(4)   For cash and food assistance, a person cannot be disqualified from receiving benefits for refusing to apply for or supply an SSN based on religious grounds.

(5)   For food assistance programs:

   (a)   A person can receive benefits for the month of application and the following month if the person attempted to apply for the SSN and made every effort to provide the needed information to the Social Security Administration.

   (b)   A newborn may receive benefits for up to six months from the date of birth if the household is unable to provide proof of application for an SSN at the time of birth.

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(6)   For medical programs a newborn as described in WAC 388-505-0210(1) is eligible for categorically needy (CN) medical without meeting the SSN requirement until the baby's first birthday.

(7)   There is no SSN requirement for the following programs:

    (a)   The consolidated emergency assistance program;

    (b)   The refugee cash and medical assistance program;

    (c)   The medically indigent program;

    (d)   The alien emergency medical program;

    (e)   The state-funded pregnant woman program;

    (f)   The children's health program; and

    (g)   Detoxification services.

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1.   Verification of a client-provided SSN is not required. The SSN is automatically validated through the SSA Numident file once it has been entered into ACES.

2.   Some persons in a household may not be a part of the assistance unit (AU) which is applying for assistance (e.g., the undocumented parents of citizen children, etc.). In such a case, SSNs for those non-AU members are not a requirement for processing the application of the applying AU.

3.   If a current and valid SSN is not available, the department is responsible for providing the client with assistance in applying for an SSN. The need for assistance may be especially pressing for Persons Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL). Consider using "Good Cause" to extend the eligibility of clients who are demonstrating a reasonable effort to comply with the SSN requirement. Problems encountered with the SSA District Office (SSADO) in the areas of acceptance of applications and/or the issuing of SSNs may be issues which are beyond the control of the client. Clients are not to be penalized under these circumstances.

4.   Personal or cultural beliefs do not qualify as a religious objection to supplying an SSN.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

1.   Applying for an SSN:

   a.   Use the DSHS 14-167(X), Enumeration Referral to refer households to the
         Social Security Administration District Office (SSADO) for:

      (1)   Application for a number;

      (2)   Application for a replacement card; or

      (3)   Determination of a previously issued number.

               Note: This form may be printed from the **DEM1** screen in ACES.

   b.   Accept Form SSA-2853 signed and dated by a hospital official as verification
         that a household applied for a SSN for a newborn while at the hospital.

   c.   Do not require verification of the SSN once the client has provided the
         number.

2.   Disqualification

   a.   With advance and adequate notice, remove any individual from the assistance
         unit who fails to provide or apply for a SSN without good cause.

   b.   Good cause exists when:

      (1)   Written proof is provided that a person attempted to apply for a SSN;
               and

      (2)   The person made substantial and reasonable efforts to supply the
               Social Security Administration with the necessary information.

   c.   Good cause does not include delays due to illness, lack of transportation, or
         temporary absence.

   d.   End the disqualification when the client provides the SSN or verification that
         they have applied for the SSN.

e.   For a child who would otherwise be eligible for CN medical (SSN requirement is the only unmet requirement), determine whether "Good Cause" for extending eligibility of CN medical exists. When the parent is unable or unwilling to provide an SSN for the child, request a exception to rule" See **EXCEPTION TO RULE**.

f.   Do not disqualify any individual who fails to provide a SSN on religious grounds.

(1)   Check with the Social Security Administration to see if a SSN has been issued for the client.

(2)   Use an existing SSN for verification and matching purposes without further notice to the client.

3.   SSNs returned by SSA as Not Validated:

a.   Follow instructions in **ACES PROCEDURES** to resolve any discrepancy when a SSN is returned by SSA because it is not valid.

b.   Terminate benefits for the entire household if:

(1)   The household is requested to provide information and it fails to do so; or

(2)   SSA cannot determine that the SSN belongs to a client who refuses to cooperate.

c.   For medical programs, children are not terminated for a parent=s failure to provide a SSN.

ACES PROCEDURES

1.   Each member of an assistance unit must have their primary SSN and the method of verification entered on the **DEM1** screen in ACES. When the number is verified through a federal crossmatch, the ACES system will change the code to **<FV>**.

2.   If the client reports additional SSNs , enter **<Y>** for "yes" under in the **(MORE SSNs)**

field. The (SSNA) screen displays. Enter all secondary SSNs and the method of verification. Press <F1> for valid values.

3.   Since the SSN is a required eligibility factor for most programs, a referral code must be entered if no SSN is made available by the applicant. These valid values are available with the **F1** key under the referral field on the **DEM1** screen.

4.   ACES generates several alerts associated with missing and incorrect SSNs.

    a.   Alert 317 is generated 60 days after the application has been processed or the client has been added to the assistance unit. This alert notifies you that 60 days have passed since the date of SSN application that was entered on the (DEM1) screen.

        (1)   Send a letter to the client to request the SSN. See **NOTICES AND LETTERS**.

        (2)   Create a user-generated alert to take action on the letter. See **ACES**.

        (3)   Document your actions.

        (4)   Dispose of the alert. See **ACES**.

    b.   Alert 303 is generated when the Eligibility Review (ER) notice is mailed for cash assistance clients that have an ER due and do not have a SSN entered on the (DEM1). This alert prompts you to send a letter to the client requesting the information with the ER. Follow steps (1) through (4) above.

    c.   Alert 305 is generated 60 days after a food assistance client claimed good cause for not providing a SSN.

        (1)   Review the client's circumstances to determine if good cause still exists.

        (2)   Update the (DEM1) if necessary.

        (3)   Document your actions.

        (4)   Dispose of the alert.

    d.   Alerts 188, 252, 254, 255, 256, 402, and 403 are generated if the SSN

entered on the (DEM1) differ from SSA files in any way. The alerts state the specific reason the SSN is incorrect.

(1)   Review the record to make sure the information on the (DEM1) matches the information in the file.

(2)   If the (DEM1) is incorrect:

    (a)   Update the (DEM1) with the correct information. <TRANSMIT>

    (b)   The (SSNA) displays. Enter the valid values for the method of verification. Press <F1><TRANSMIT>

    (c)   The (NMCL) displays. Enter a [Y] next to the correct Client ID. Press <F20>

    (d)   Document your actions.

    (e)   Dispose of the alert.

(3)   If the (DEM1) is correct:

    (a)   Send a letter to the client advising them to contact SSA to correct the information.

    (b)   Create a user-generated alert to take action on the letter.

    (c)   Document your actions.

    (d)   Dispose of the alert.